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24 January 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR: EXECUTIVE
ASSISTANT DIRECTORS - OPC -
COAPS

FROM: Assistant Director, OCD

SUBJECT: Requirements

1. The Management Officer has proposed that we set up a standing committee to coordinate requirements, the committee to comprise representatives of all CIA Offices and of the IAC agencies. The Committee would meet each morning at 0900, and each member would confront the others with the requirements originated by his Office or agency during the past 24 hours. Coordination would thereupon ensue: overlaps would be ironed out, priorities would be established, and joint agreement would be reached as to who should collect what.

OCD fears that this well-intentioned proposal would not work well in practice, - that it would be costly in manhours, would introduce another time-consuming barrier in the already obstructed channel between requester and collector, and would add to the workload of all Offices.

2. Memoranda concerning the requirements problem invariably start off by saying how important the problem is, and they generally go on to say that CIA is doing a very poor job of getting its requirements coordinated. It seems to OCD that this theme may have been overstressed, and that we don't in fact encounter very many or very serious difficulties arising from imperfect coordination of requirements. Liaison Division of OCD is a broker in the intelligence business: it receives requirements with one hand and attempts to get answers with the other. Simultaneously it listens to complaints from both sides - the collection side, and the production side which issues the requirements. It is noteworthy that complaints about improper coordination do not often come from either the actual producers of intelligence, or from the actual collectors of information. It is rather the planners and policy-makers - people who do not themselves originate or act upon requirements - who worry most about improper coordination.

3. Staff studies concerning the coordination of requirements commonly overlook the fact that most requirements do not need to be coordinated. Thus:

Requests for specific documents need only to be acted upon. It is assumed, save in very rare instances, that the requester

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is legitimately entitled to see the document if a copy can be located. The only "coordination" required is to ensure that other agencies are not asked to transmit a document which has already been supplied to CIA.

Requests for pinpoint field collection action seldom require inter-Office or inter-agency coordination, because the vast majority of such requests are for current information. If ORE's specialist on Iran asks that it be ascertained whether or not a particular road in Iran has been hard-surfaced it is safe to assume that he does so because the information is not available in Washington. The analyst spends all his time working on Iran problems, he is familiar with the vast majority of the information on Iran which is in Washington files, and he has seen all the recent reports which deal with Iran. Even if Washington has file cabinets of information on Iran highways which he has not seen, it is very safe to assume that they will not be sufficiently up-to-date to tell him whether or not the road has been hard-surfaced within recent months - and that is what he wants to know. In any case, the MA in Teheran can doubtless get the answer in five minutes by making a phone call from his desk, and he will be delighted to receive the request because, for once, it will be on a subject which he can answer promptly, surely, and with minimum effort. The only cost involved is that of a cable to Teheran - which is considerably less than the cost of extensive surveying, staff-studying, and committee action.

4. Those requirements which do call for coordination are relatively few in number, and they are commonly of a broad and long-term nature. If we are to build up a compendium of standing requirements for a particular area then, plainly, we must take into account the interests of all who are concerned in the area. This can be done only by consultation between the specialists concerned - it can not be done by a committee composed of people who know little or nothing about the area. Hence it is the inter-agency committee or sub-committee set up to deal with a particular aspect of intelligence - whether meteorology, or Soviet propaganda, or East-West trade - which can best canvas the field and draw up a good set of requirements with realistic priorities.

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5. The Chief, COAPS, has recently made the following statement:
"The advisability of establishing a requirements coordinating committee is not recognized. Intra-CIA Committees should be rare exceptions. The inter-relationship of the CIA offices under the existing administrative organization provides adequately for continual inter-office liaison. As inter-agency committees are established, coordination of requirements in specific fields of interest should uniformly become a function of such committees. Where no inter-agency coordinating committee exists in a particular field of interest, the AD/OCD will effect the coordination of the several interests within CIA, through the Liaison Branch or otherwise as he shall determine to be most efficacious."

6. The COAPS recommendation is practical, realistic, and workable. OCD heartily concurs with it, and trusts that the Executive will not impose upon us a cumbersome, time-consuming, and ineffective Requirements Committee.

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JAMES M. ANDREWS

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Memo from James M. Andrews, Assistant Director OCD for Executive, Assistant Directors, COAPS.

ABSTRACT NOTATION REFERENCES

Disagrees with Management Officer proposal for a standing committee to meet daily to coordinate requirements. Feels that most requirements do not need coordination (i.e., they may be pinpoint collection requests). When coordination is desirable it should be done by the specialists concerned not by a high level committee.

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